

# FLOATING FIGURES:

The Holy Ghost In Space  
And Its Place At The Great Gallery

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With a lower wall, right, and an upper wall, left, the Great Gallery, Canyonlands National Park, is about 300 feet in width with more than 80 anthropomorphic figures and additional bird, sheep, and snake images.



The lower wall of the Great Gallery with the Holy Ghost Group, a discreet composition framed by a shallow alcove with figures in close proximity and orientation.



The Holy Ghost Group, the tallest figure, the Holy Ghost, is about eight feet in height. Variable spacing, between figures, reflects a natural gathering.

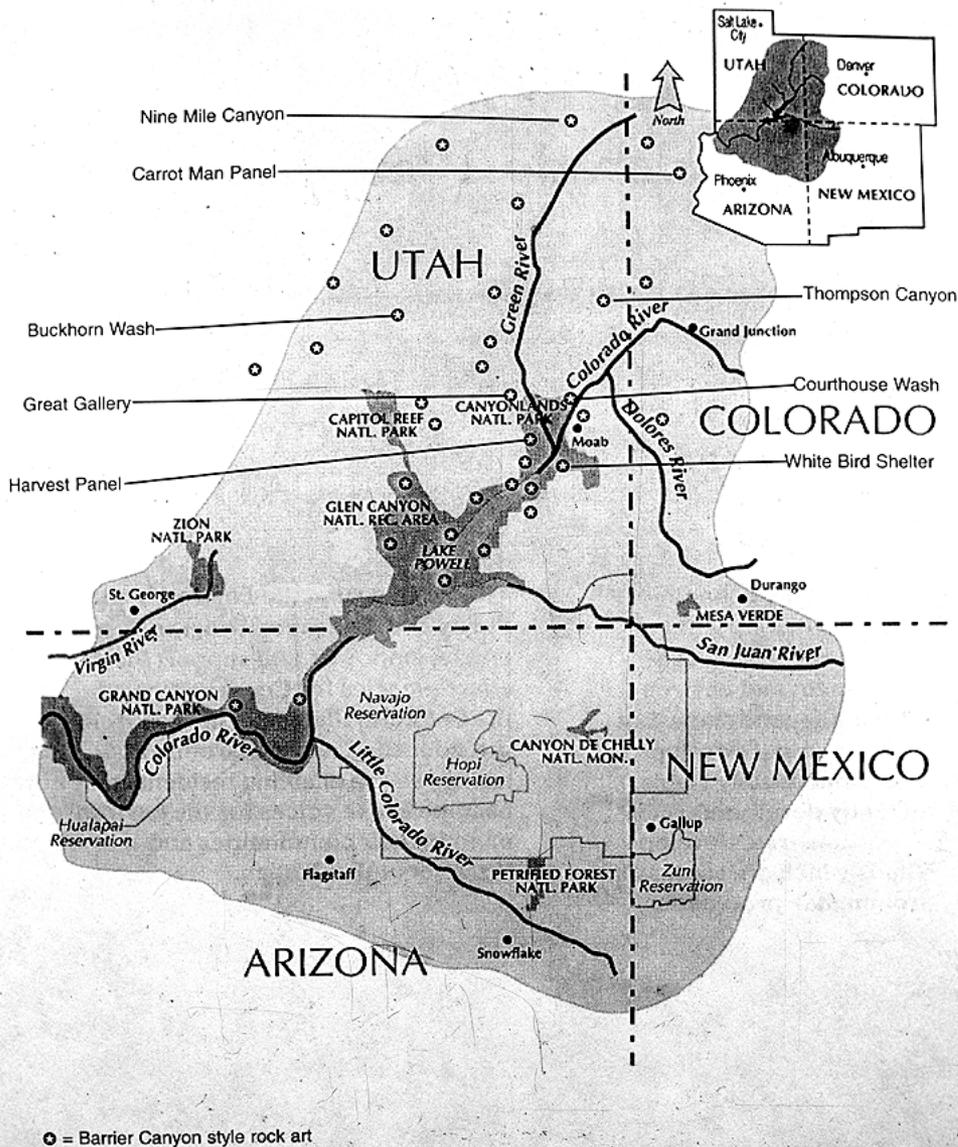
# The Barrier Canyon Style

- Rock art style associated with image makers from the Archaic Period (earliest reported Utah BCS AMS carbon dates circa 6500 b.c.e., latest reported date circa c.e. 300).
- Style territory: BCS figures are found south from near the Grand Canyon north to Vernal area and west from the Wasatch Plateau east to western Colorado—about 235 by 135 miles.

- Selected Barrier Canyon style rock art sites on the Colorado Plateau.

- Style area extends south from the north rim of the Grand Canyon on the west side of the Colorado river north to the Uintah Basin/Vernal area. West from the Wasatch Plateau east to western Colorado.

- Greatest concentration of sites range from the Escalante River drainage north to Uintah Basin.



Heart of the Barrier Canyon style territory, the confluence of the Green and Colorado Rivers, Canyonlands National Park.



Maze area, looking east to the Blue Mountains near Monticello.



Horseshoe Canyon, Great Gallery area, looking down canyon.



# Barrier Canyon Style Characteristics

- 1) Large rock art sites (galleries of 90 to 300 feet in length) exemplified by the Great Gallery and the Harvest Panel in Canyonlands National Park.
- 2) Life-size to heroic scale distinctive anthropomorphic figures (*spirit figures*) such as the Holy Ghost.
- 3) A large number of variations (variety of form-types) of spirit figures.
- 4) Compositions apparently representing friendly associations of animal, bird, snake and plant images with anthropomorphic figures.
- 5) The consistent attention given to virtuoso image making techniques and particular visual motif/visual forms, especially the parallel line motif.



Discreet compositions  
at the Great Gallery.



- Left side of Holy Ghost figure “overlapping” the shoulder area of the dark red figure to its left.
- Since the red figure has not been a braded (erased), it was painted after, and in relation to, the Holy Ghost figure.
- Formal/spatial relationships within the Holy Ghost figure.
  - Interior head design
  - Parallel line motif
- Image making techniques.
  - Spray
  - Brush/finger
  - Incising
  - Abrading



- Parallel line motif
- Image making techniques
  - Sprayed
  - Brushed/fingered
  - Incised/scratched
  - Abraded
- Contour adjustment on right side of figure.



- Parallel line motif
- Spray
- Wavy line within scratched parallel lines
- Horizontal lines of pecked dots
- Abrading between figures



- 3/4 view of head--front and side of head

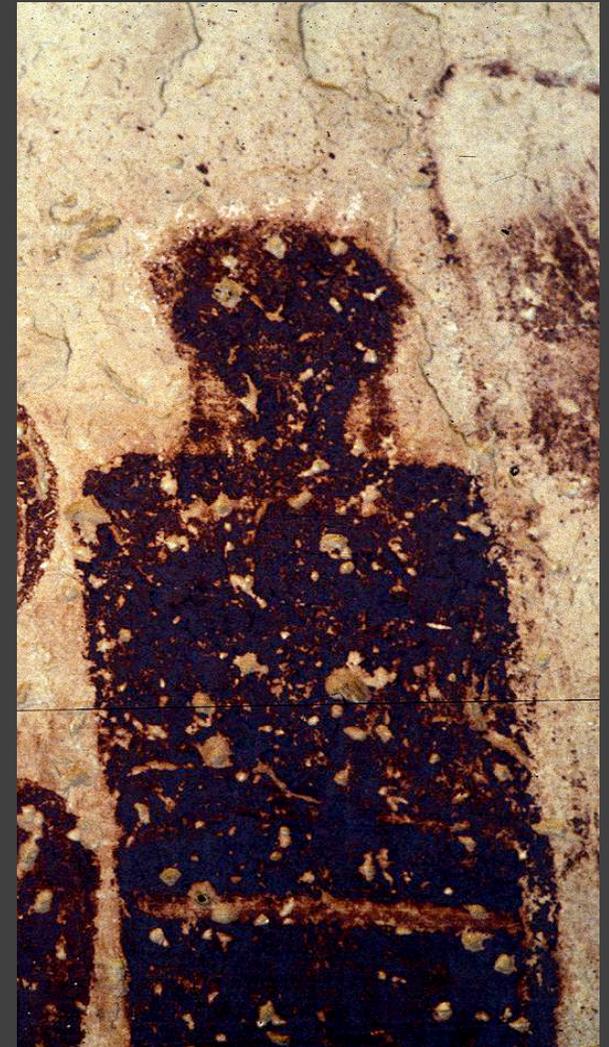
- Double antennae

- Figure/ground spatial dynamics



## Left Figures: part of the original composition?

- Similar color tone
- Similar “feather crown”
- Similar proportional form
- Similar line of dots





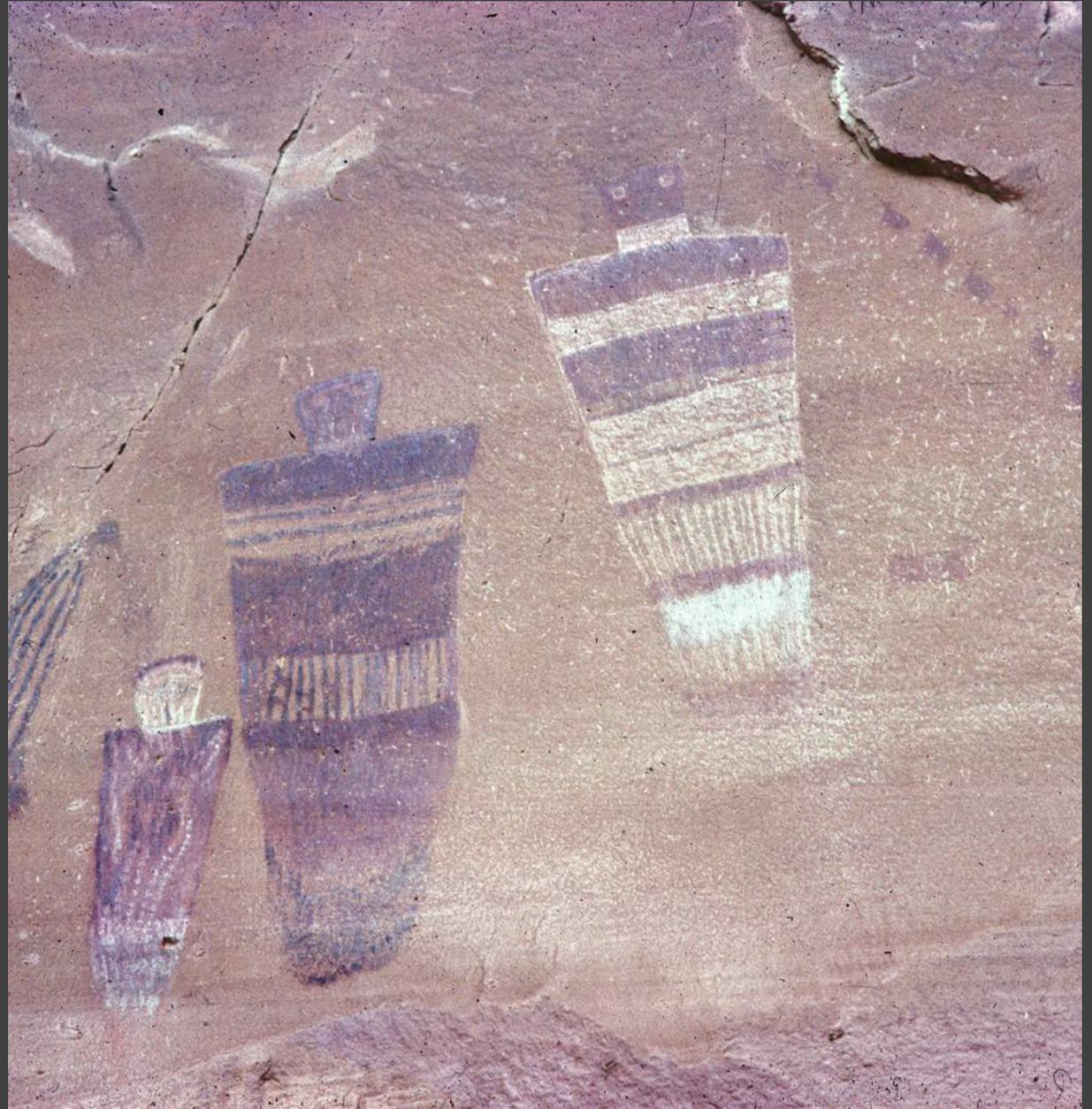


Large part of the lower wall of the Great Gallery to the right of the Holy Ghost Group. From the far right, a group of three figures in the wash painting technique, the banded figures in red and white, and the group of figures made with the finger smear technique.



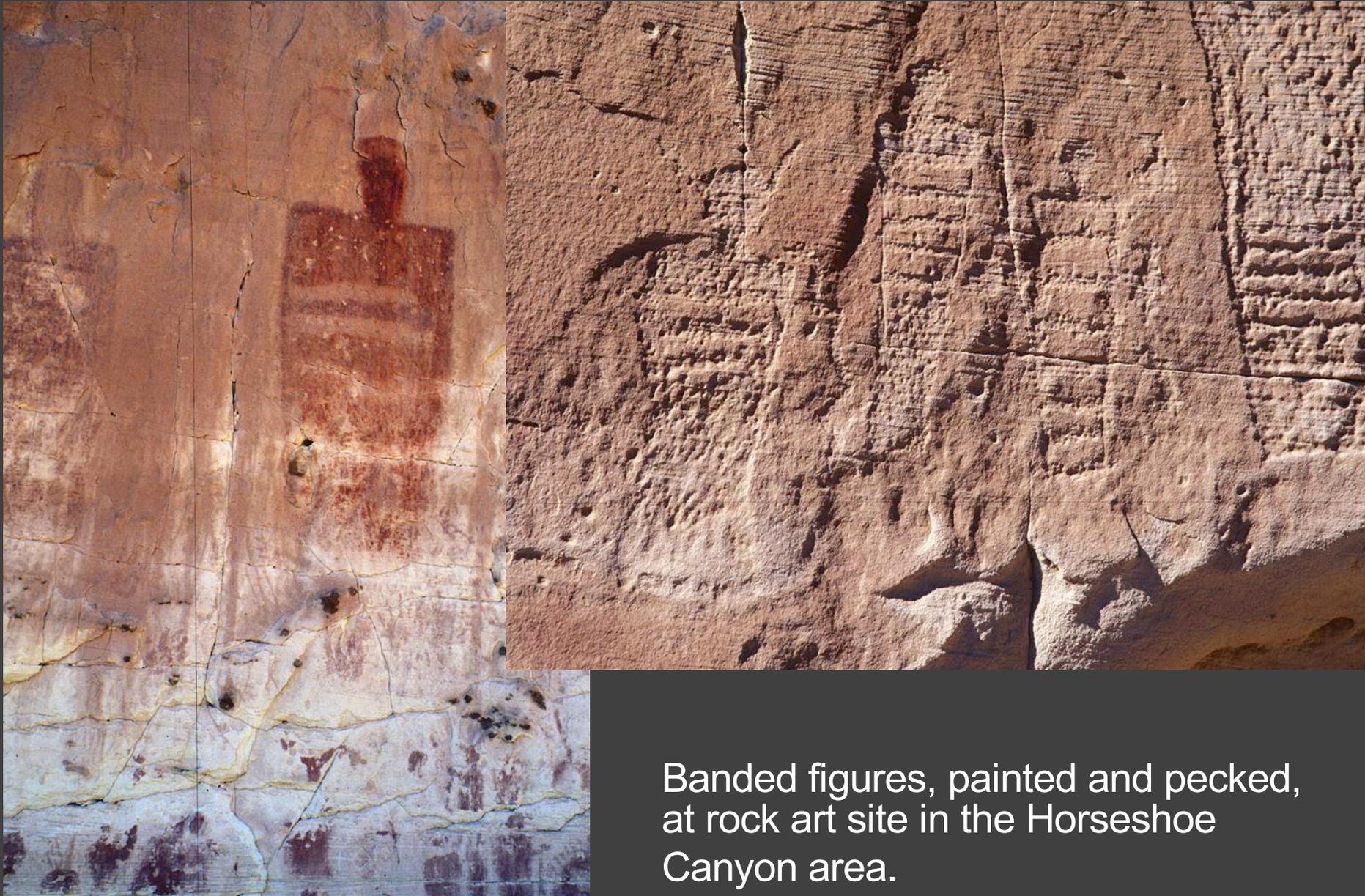
The Banded figures group

Banded figures with vertical parallel line within horizontal bands.



- Detail of banded figure, with short roughly parallel vertical and diagonal incised lines in neck and chest areas.





Banded figures, painted and pecked,  
at rock art site in the Horseshoe  
Canyon area.

Banded figure superimposing older pecked Barrier Canyon style spirit figures. Banded figure has lighter patination.





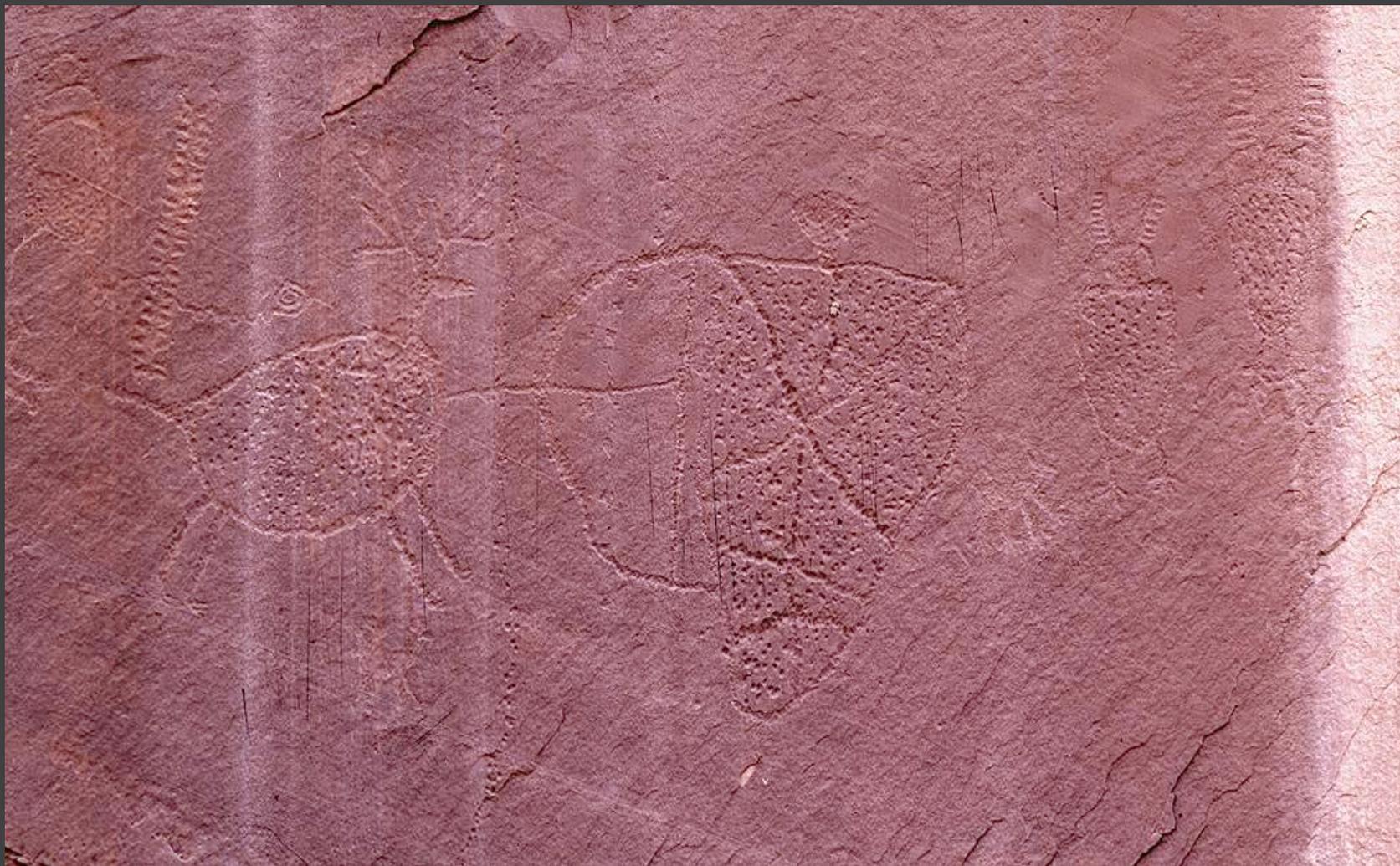
The Finger Smear figures group

Pecked Spirit Figure with "X" on body similar to the finger smear figure at the Great Gallery.

From same site as the figure with bow and arrow and with a similar degree of repatination.



Pecked BCS Spirit Figure with bow and arrow, south of Hanksville, Utah, with "X" across body. Figures at far right with Fremont style head dress but with BCS torso and bird feet. Bow and Arrow thought to appear in Utah after 200 c.e.





The Wash Technique figures group

Wash Technique figure site north of the confluence of the Green and Colorado Rivers. Figure forms are not similar to the Horseshoe variant.



Large Wash Technique figures from the Black Dragon site. One figure here has been dated to ca. 6,500 b.c.e. but it may be the Horseshoe variant figure underlying the second figure from the left.



White figure with irregular head but Horseshoe variant torso with raised shoulders.



- White figure with irregular head form and vertical and horizontal grid of paired lines.

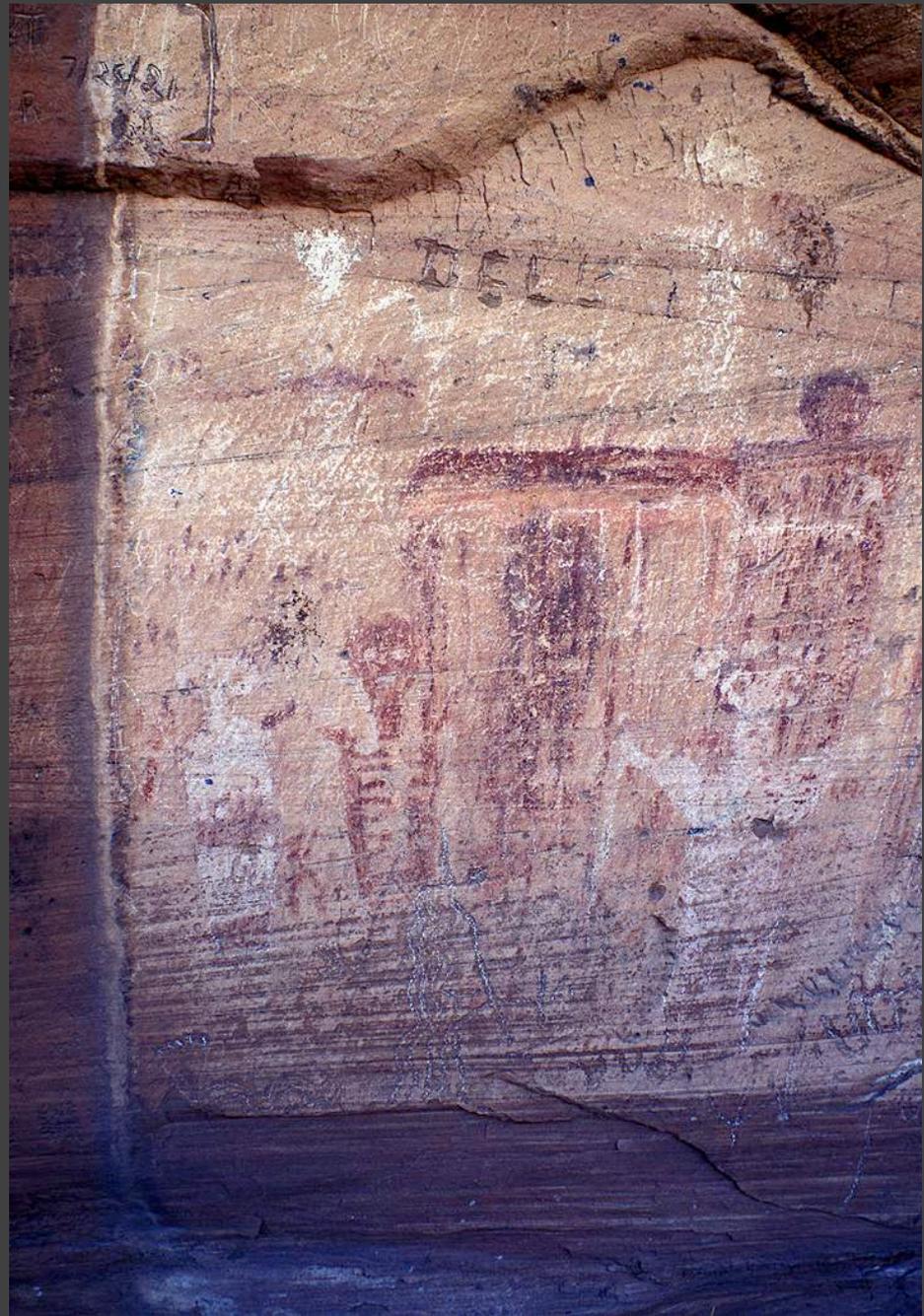


Irregular figures, white and red, including two figures more typical of the Horseshoe variant. Site north of the confluence of the Green and Colorado rivers.



- White figure superimposed on a more typical Barrier Canyon style spirit figure.

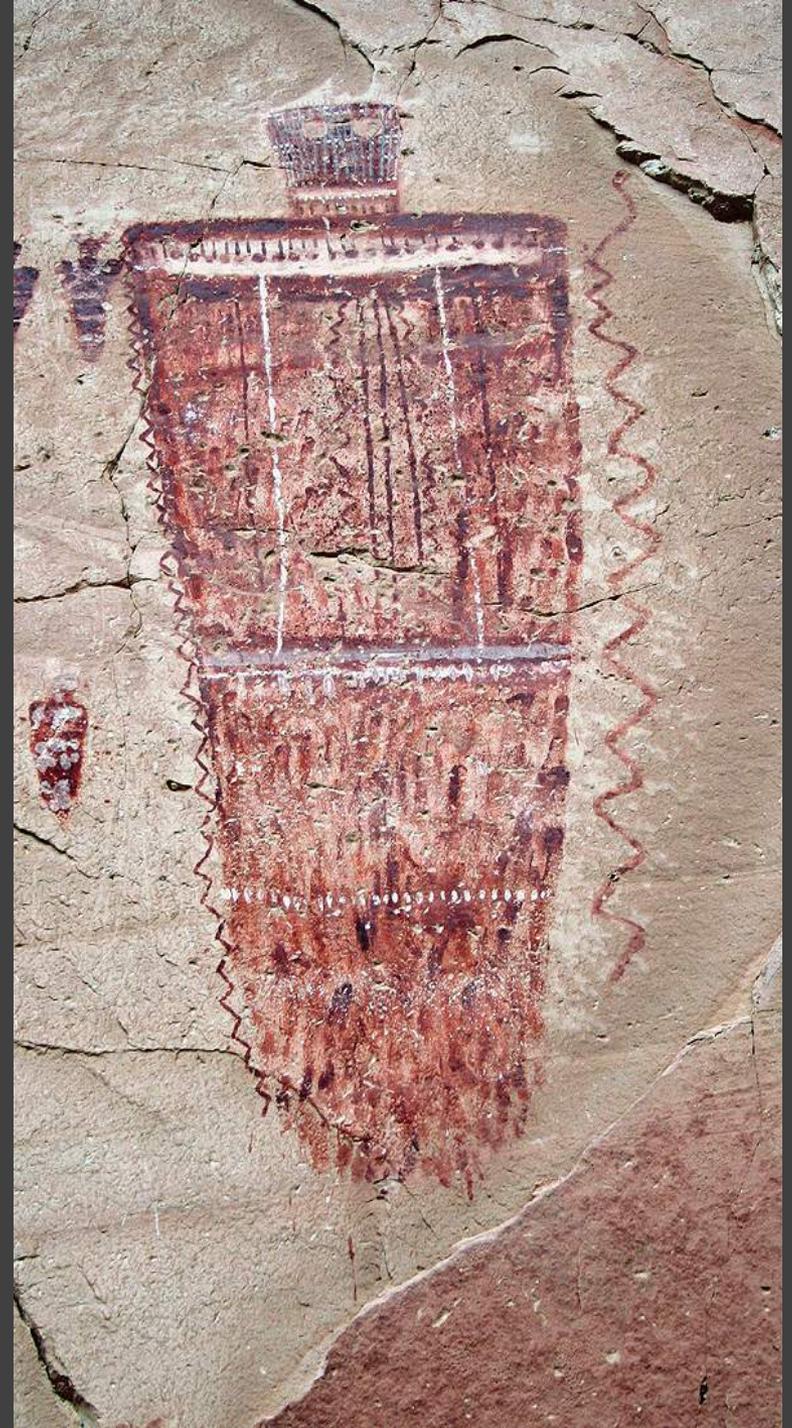
- Site near Moab.





Mixed figures, in Horseshoe variant form, parallel line motif, wavy lines, and figures within figures.

- Underpainted figure with finger smears, parallel line motif in body and head, white bands, lines, and line of dots; a wavy line flanking the contour on the left and a vertical wavy line/stylized snake on the right.



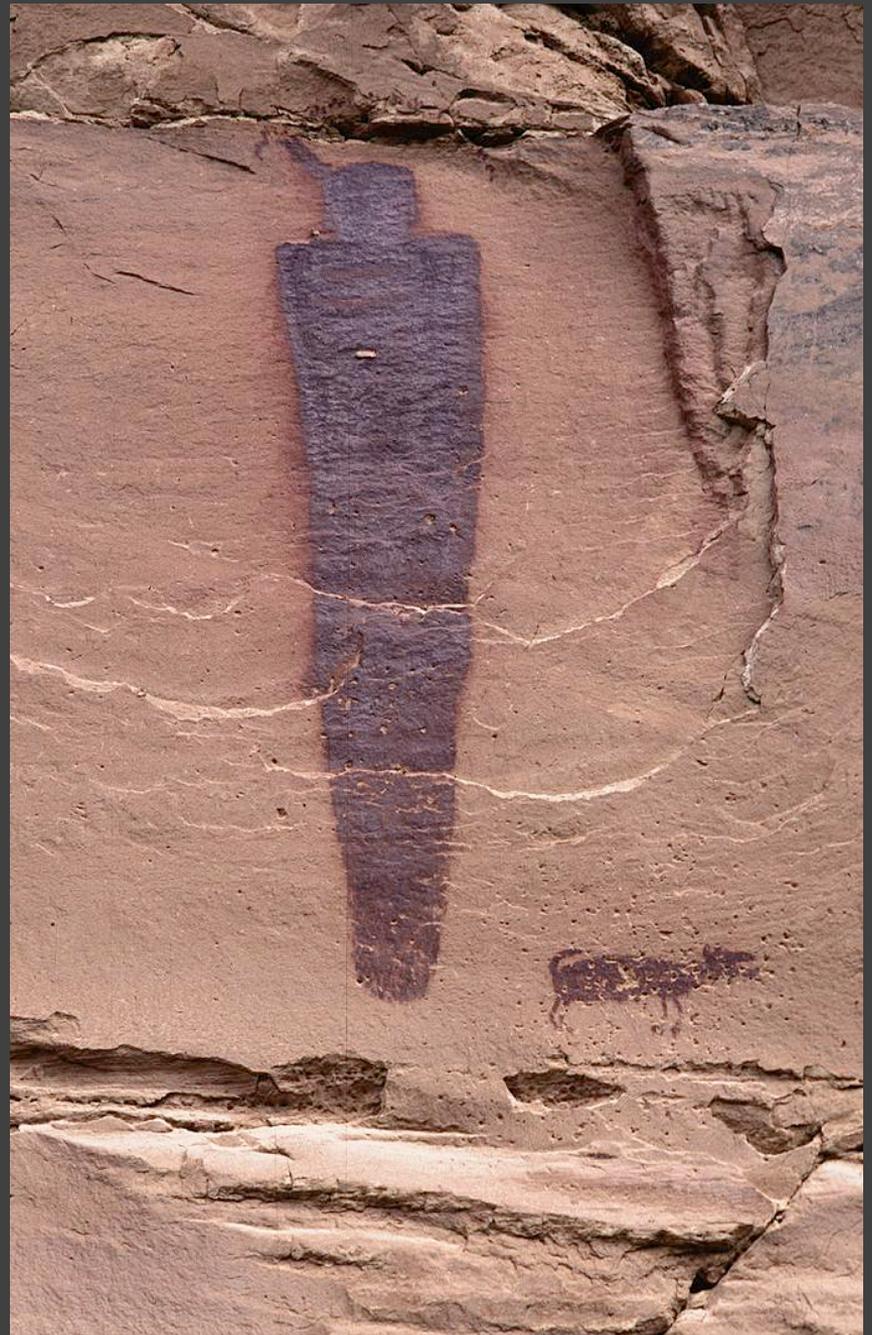
- Harvest Panel figures with wavy lines parallel to side contours, parallel line motif and splatters.

- Maze variant spirit figure form unlike the Horseshoe variant found at the Great Gallery.



- Carrot shaped spirit figure at far right of the lower wall of the Great Gallery.

- Companion to the small barking dog with curved tail—a Barrier Canyon style motif.



Courthouse Wash Panel, near the Colorado River, with figures similar to the carrot shaped figure at the Great Gallery.



